



CHAYAT HASHAVUA: OSTRICH

CAN ANYONE TEACH US THE *ENGLISH* NAME FOR THE LARGEST LIVING BIRD?

- It's the ostrich.
- Can anyone teach us the Hebrew name for the ostrich (in the Bible)?
- It's *re-na-nim* (רִנָּיִם), which means to “give a ringing [or loud] cry.” (Job 39:13-18)
- Can anyone teach us what song we sing at the beginning of the Friday night service that has a word from the same Hebrew root? (*L'khu n'rananah*. . . —Come, let us sing out. . .)
- But the ostrich is also called *yaein* (יַעִין), which means “voracious.”
- What does “voracious” mean? (Eats great amounts of food.)

IS THERE ANYTHING YOU LIKE ABOUT THE OSTRICH?

- They have beautiful feathers.
- Their skin makes beautiful leather.
- It's said that ostrich meat is very tasty—has anyone ever eaten it?

WHICH REMINDS ME—IS THE OSTRICH KOSHER?

- No. (Leviticus 11:16, Deuteronomy 14:15)
- Why not? (They're predators—they eat lizards and turtles.)

WHAT MIGHT WE DISLIKE ABOUT THE OSTRICH?

- They can be cruel.
- When they run away in fear they often hurt their own chicks.
- The mother ostrich hatches only some of her eggs; the rest are abandoned and used as food for her other newborn chicks.
- When cornered they kick with their powerful legs, and their long toes have thick nails that serve as weapons.

IT'S TIME FOR THE OSTRICH QUIZ!

- How tall are the tallest ostriches? (About eight feet.)
- How heavy are the heaviest ostriches? (About 350 pounds.)
- How fast can the ostrich run? (About 40 miles per hour.)
- How much does the egg of an ostrich weigh? (About three pounds.)
- How long does the ostrich live? (About 70 years.)
- How high can the ostrich fly? (It's can't fly!)

- What is the ostrich doing when it sticks its head in the sand?
(Rearranging the eggs in the nest.)

WE SAID THAT ONE OF THE HEBREW NAMES FOR THE OSTRICH, *YAEIN*, MEANS “VORACIOUS.”

- Does anyone know how the ostrich got that name a long, long time ago?
- It was said that in Noah’s ark, the ostriches were fed glass?
- And if you think that’s not enough, it’s said that the ostrich can digest iron! (Book of Legends)
- There are also stories that long ago ostriches were fed pieces of gold covered with dough, and after their gastric juices had refined the gold—removed the impurities, they passed the gold out of their bodies with their waste.
- One last story: Rabbi Abba was once praying with his tefilin on. (Moed Katan 26a)
- Who can teach us what tefilin are? (In English they’re called phylacteries—small boxes that contain verses from the Torah—that traditional Jews wear when praying.)
- Anyway, he had to go to the bathroom, so he took off his tefilin.
- Just at that moment a young ostrich happened along.
- And what do you think that ostrich tried to do?—he tried to eat Rabbi Abba’s tefilin!



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